IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 25 with the following:

Fibers forming the substrate are preferably hydrophilic fibers such as wood pulp, rayon, cotton, regenerated cellulose or other cellulose fibers because they are used in water-absorbing articles, and these fibers derive the greatest benefit from the present invention and substrates based on such a hydrophilic fiber are especially preferred in the present invention. Other suitable fibrous substrates are based on polyester fibers or other classes of non-hydrophilic fibers such as polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene, polyamide, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinylidene chloride, ~~polyacrilonitrile~~ polyacrylonitrile, polyuurea, polyurethane, polyfluoroethylene, polyvinylidene cyanide fibers. Relatively dense fibrous substrates made of paper, wood, back skin, leather or the like may also be used.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 31, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The painted figure including the contour was expressed as a binary pattern (0,1) to find the center of gravity ~~(Gx, y)~~ (Gx, Gy). If all the four pixels on four sides surrounding a target black pixel are "1", the target pixel was judged as an inner pixel to determine the contour (a closed curve of the boundary of the figure). Then, black pixels forming the contour were continuously traced to derive the coordinate sequence ~~(Yi, Xi)~~ (Xi, Yi) of the contour line consisting of m data.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 29, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A relative displacement of the direction $(\Delta\theta)$ was calculated from the coordinate sequence ~~(Yi, Xi)~~ (Xi, Yi) of the contour line. The relative displacement of the direction is

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defined by the equation below. That is, the relative displacement of the direction of an i-th contour datum ($\Delta\theta$) is a directional difference between a vector joining the i-th datum (Xi, Yi) to a (i+n)-th datum (Xi+n, Yi+n) and a vector joining a (i+n)-th datum (Xi-n, Yi-n) to the i-th datum (Xi, Yi) and the relative displacement of the direction is 0°degree, if both vectors have the same direction. There is no discrimination between right and left directions of variation.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 30, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The maximum and minimum length of agglomerates were determined from processed images of agglomerates. As used herein, the maximum and minimum length refer to the maximum and minimum lengths as diameters of agglomerates ~~but may not be necessarily~~ <u>and are</u> orthogonal. The maximum length/minimum length ratio was calculated by dividing the maximum length by the minimum length. Any material having a maximum length/minimum length ratio less than 1.2 cannot be considered as an agglomerate structure.